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AUTHOR Shirley, Philip
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ABSTRACT

Presented are guidelines for publicizing educational programs through various media. Among the approaches considered are news releases, exhibits, brochures, radio talk shows, and television public service announcements. The manual provides a brief overview of each medium along with the specific mechanics of preparing material such as posters, news releases, and public service announcements. (WB)

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ALABAMA / ENERGY AND THE WAY WE LIVE

How to Attract a Crowd
A Publicity Manual

HOW TO ATTRACT A CROWD

A Publicity Manual

for

ALABAMA/ENERGY

AND THE WAY WE LIVE

Prepared by

Philip Shirley

The Committee for the Humanities in Alabama

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Montgomery, Alabama
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HOW TO ATTRACT A CROWD

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Special thanks are extended to the Louisiana Committee for the Humanities and to the Oklahoma Humanities Committee whose publications were used as resources in the preparation of this booklet.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLICITY

The maximum benefits of any public program can be obtained only if the event is well attended. This booklet was prepared to help your group secure an audience by telling you how the media works and by offering the basics of the technical know-how needed to most effectively use both print and electronic media.

Ideally, a public program should have a Public Relations Chairman and several staff members to handle individual areas, such as print media, electronic media, direct mail, and displays/exhibits. However, one or two persons can perform these duties if necessary. The PR chairman must work closely with the project director to be sure publicity opportunities aren't missed as they occur.

Time is important. As soon as the project dates are set, a step-by-step plan should be made: When the stories should break, where, and so forth. Remember to be fair to each newspaper by allowing each one the opportunity to run a feature story different from the other papers. Make a schedule by finding out the deadlines of the various newspapers, radio and TV stations. It is never too early to start!

The technical information herein is very basic, so don't be afraid to contact media people for advice or recommendations. Invest in any booklets you can find on lay-out and design of flyers or how to write press releases. These are usually inexpensive and well worth a few dollars.

Be original. Be creative. Explore. And remember: PR work is everybody's job. Let every project member know the facts, dates, and times of the project and encourage them to spread the news by word of mouth.

IMPORTANT POINT: Always list your funding source in a prominent place. Whenever a project is paid for partially or entirely by an outside source, it is your obligation to be sure that this information is in all press releases, flyers, brochures, posters and paid advertisements. The following statement is a good example: This program is made possible by a grant from the Committee for the Humanities in Alabama.

PRINT MEDIA

NEWSPAPERS: 5 WAYS TO GET INTO PRINT

NEWS RELEASES

Always type anything submitted to news agencies; this insures that facts, figures and names will be read correctly. Be sure of all spelling and dates.

Be clear and brief. Read several newspaper articles, noticing how the stories include who, what, where, when, why and how.

Usually about three paragraphs are a reasonable length, but be sure the essential facts are toward the beginning of the article (if stories are shortened by editors, they begin by chopping from the end of the story.)

For a few dollars you may obtain the "Associated Press Style Book", which explains in detail how to write a news release. Write to: Associated Press
50 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10020

The Mechanics of Writing a Press Release (see example #1)

a. Use white 8½ x 11" paper. Type on one side. Turn in original and one carbon (or photocopy). Keep a copy.

b. Double space, leaving 1½" margins on all sides. Always end a page at a paragraph ending, even if it means going over the margin.

c. Drop down 3" from top and identify the story in five words or less. On the next line put the name of your group or organization. Skip a few lines and put the name, address, and phone number of the "contact" person (publicity chairman). Skip a few more lines and put the release date (the day the story should appear).

d. On each succeeding page use a two or three word identification in the top left corner. Write "add 1" on the second page, "add 2" on the third page, etc. Also write "more" at the bottom of the page if more of the story follows. Put # # # at the bottom of the last page.

e. Indent all paragraphs. Begin the story half way down the first page and on the sixth line of the succeeding pages.

f. When you actually get around to writing the story, be sure you answer WHO?, WHAT?, WHERE?, WHEN?, HOW?. Use a good lead sentence and try to entice your reader to continue.

g. Use photos when possible. (see "Using Photos")

h. Do not be overwhelmed by these instructions, just look at the examples and you will see it is not that complicated.

Submitting a "Fact Sheet" (see example #2)

If you feel uncomfortable or unable to write your own news release, you may instead submit a fact sheet. Follow the mechanics of the news release, but provide the information by answering what, who, when, where, why and how. See the example in the back of this booklet for an idea of how the page should look.

ADVERTISEMENT

Though it is best to try for the news section and public service announcements, you may want to buy some advertisment. Rates and deadlines vary, so check with local papers before submitting anything. Most newspapers will advise you on how to submit ads, but here are a few tips to remember:

a. Use art work or photos when available.

b. Avoid long copy.

c. Use plenty of white space. (Borders should be decided before an ad is set.)

FEATURE STORIES

Let the proper editor (in larger cities usually the "city editor") know about your project/event and its human interest. If the story really is newsworthy, the editor will investigate the possibility of a feature story.

Let the editor know that you believe in the project and try (politely!) to convince him/her of its newsworthiness. Be sure the editor knows about all prominent persons involved. Emphasize community involvement. The more people involved, the more likely the editor will be interested.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor which explain the importance of the project/event to the community are often a valuable source of free publicity and a way to arouse interest in a feature story being written. Be sure to emphasize the project, rather than be a back-patter.

SPECIAL COLUMNS

Scan local newspapers for columns which print stories in the area of your project. See if your announcement would help the business editor? Women's editor? City Hall reporter?

NEWSLETTERS: HOW TO FIND AND USE THEM

Many groups publish weekly, monthly, or quarterly newsletters and welcome announcements of anything important to its members. Check with other project members for newsletters they may receive or know about. You may be surprised at the mailing you come up with. Include: PTA's, churches, legal societies, social groups, women's groups, study clubs, lodges, utility companies, business organizations, schools and universities.

These releases should be in story form. (Don't merely send a fact sheet, because these are non-profit newsletters which do not employ reporters to write up stories). See "News Releases" under "Newspapers" to see how to write the releases.

Brevity usually helps the chances of inclusion.

GRAPHICS: TELLING WHO AND WHAT YOU ARE

FLYERS, POSTERS, BROCHURES

These may range from a simple mimeograph sheet to a printed and folded booklet.

Usually about eight weeks are necessary to get printed flyers and brochures into the hands of the public (two for planning, four-five for production, and one week for mailing), so begin early.

Secure a mailing list. (See "Newsletters")

THE MECHANICS OF DESIGN AND LAYOUT FOR FLYERS, POSTERS OR BROCHURES

(see example #3)

Small, simple booklets on design and layout are available from art supply stores and bookstores. These are most helpful to anyone with little or no experience in this area.

a. Solicit local talent-volunteer professionals or skilled amateurs - to write copy and design the brochure. Consult pros if necessary.

b. Look over all types of brochures to get ideas on the many possibilities.

c. Be simple. Be to the point.

d. Be clever, but not "cutesy". Decide your primary message and write copy to get across one main point.

e. Design your message on a page in an arrangement you like. Sketch in headlines and graphics where used. Experiment with several designs.

f. Consult a printer about the idea you come up with. Is it feasible? Can it be done at a reasonable cost?

g. Ask the printer to explain all advantages and disadvantages of printing processes available, paying special attention to extra costs in using photos and artwork.

h. Make an actual size "mock up" of the flyer or brochure you want and take it to several printers for estimates. The printers will help you decide on paper stock, ink, or format, and sometimes make other recommendations.

i. Presenting the printer with "camera ready" copy will save much on printing costs. Ask a printer about this possibility.

EXHIBITS: EYECATCHERS THAT DISSEMINATE INFORMATION AND SPARK INTEREST

Though these often crossover into "Electronic Media" I put them with Print Media because they are best when used as attention-getters to get flyers and brochures into the hands of the public.

Possible locations: Banks, utility companies, shopping centers, store windows, churches, recreation centers, Government buildings, schools, libraries.

Whatever exhibit you use, it must be "professionally done". Sloppy posters or artwork hurt, rather than help.

TABLE DISPLAYS, FREE STANDING EXHIBITS, POSTERS, PHOTO EXHIBITS

Any well-done display is good when used in conjunction with handouts and brochures. Depending on size and technical problems (i.e. electrical outlets), displays can be used almost anywhere that people gather or pass by.

The possibilities are endless; and more importantly, almost anyone can put together a professional looking display, provided the right tools are used. To insure yourself of a good display, go to a local art store and tell the clerk what you have in mind. The clerk can suggest the appropriate paper, posterboard, straight-edge, pens, etc.

Remember-Posters and displays are important for two reasons: One, they can be done by project members, thus involving more people. Two, they are relatively inexpensive, yet an effective use of print media.

SLIDE/TAPE SHOWS

Slides are a relatively inexpensive means of photography and can be done with a normal 35MM camera. Professional labs usually return color slides in about a week.

When using narrative (taped or live), it should be brief (5-10 seconds per slide) and show some sense of continuity. Consult with someone who has done a slide show for details of what is involved.

FILM AND VIDEO TAPE

Considerable expertise is necessary to produce motion pictures worthy of airing; therefore I do not recommend either film or video tape use unless you or someone in your group has such experience.

For information, consult any of the many fine books available in libraries on television production, filming (editing, script, etc.) and videotaping. If you feel you need to do some type of motion picture, consult local professionals who can explain the costs, time, availability of equipment, and the necessary expertise. If you have the expertise and funding, these can be very valuable resources.

LETTERS: AN IMPORTANT PERSONAL TOUCH

Letters are an important tool of personal communication, especially when used in conjunction with other forms of publicity.

Letters should do two things:

1. Call to action (invite the reader to attend, help and announce)

2. Encourage interest (be sure to include where, when, what, etc.)

Don't shotgun personal letters, which is time consuming and costly. Simply decide who you want to reach, then compose a mailing list of key persons who have regular contact with that audience and write them. There may be over-lapping with flyers and such, but don't let that stop you. Include: clergy, officers of interested organizations, media people, teachers, heads of civic groups, PTA and clubs.

Ask for help or names of others who should be contacted about your project.

Thank you letters to those who help spread the word are a great way to encourage attendance and interest, as well as to serve as reminders.

(The strategy used in this section also applies to use of the telephone.)

USING PHOTOS: A VALUABLE ASSET

Tips on Taking Usable Photos

When possible, secure a 5 x 7 or 8 x 10 black & white glossy photograph from the prominent people involved. This will save time and money.

A 35MM camera is in fairly standard use for news or magazine photos. TRI-X or Plus X film are both acceptable.

Take several photos of each desired subject. Have these printed on "contact sheets" (8x10 paper with an entire roll printed in miniature.) From these the best photos can be enlarged to the desired size-usually 8 x 10 black & white for newspapers. Use a marking pencil to indicate how each photo should be cropped. Nothing superfluous should appear.

Three to five persons in a shot seems to be the most acceptable practice, unless it is a crowd or group shot. Have the people doing something, such as talking, rather than looking at papers.

How to Prepare Photos

Identify all people in the photo on a separate sheet, from left to right. Check names and spellings. Attach this list to the photo, along with an explanation of what the people are doing (tape it to the back of the photo). Don't write on the photo. Check all crop marks.

To get the photo back, send self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Magazines, sometimes newspapers, will accept color slides, though they will probably print them in black and white. Never send polaroid prints.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

RADIO: 4 WAYS TO GET AIR TIME

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSA's) are free, usually aired two or three times daily. A listing of all local radio stations may be found in the yellow pages under "Radio Stations and Broadcast Companies."

The Mechanics of PSAs (see example #4)

a. These may be tapes, or written out for the DJ to read. Check local stations for their preference. (Most stations will make a tape free of charge).

b. Most stations prefer 10-, 30-, or 60-second psa's (about 25 words is 10 seconds).

c. Include an intriguing opening, plus the basic WHO, WHAT, WHERE information.

d. Use short, easy to pronounce words. Read the copy aloud to be sure.

e. If making a tape, use sound effects, music, maybe two voices.

f. If submitting written psa's type on one side of the white index cards. Include your name and phone number, as well as the name of your group, typed in the top left corner.

g. Skip two lines and type "Good _____". (fill in blank with dates and times the psa should begin and end.)

h. Skip several lines and type "ANNR:" Indent each line of the announcement the same number of spaces.

TALK SHOWS

Check local stations about the possibility of talk show appearances. Many times stations are looking for people to be on these programs.

If this is arranged, be sure to give to the show host a fact sheet early enough that the questions will be appropriate.

NEWS RELEASES

Include radio in your list of news release media, but write specifically for radio. As in psa's, use short sentences and easy words. Use "action" words that are colorful and forceful.

Under your name and phone number, type the time (i.e. 10 seconds) and "News Spot." (see examples #1 & 4)

RADIO ADS

Ads are the business of radio, so any radio station will gladly explain to you the ins and outs of cost and production. Use radio ads only if your project is large enough to warrant the cost involved.

TELEVISION

Obviously, if TV time can be secured, it will reach large audiences. Because TV time is so valuable, it may be difficult to get. The best way to get TV time is to make personal contacts.

Find out who directs Public Service at the station. Call and make an appointment to drop by and get acquainted. Do this as far in advance as possible.

Explain your project and plans. Stress (but not too forcefully) the importance of the project and its public interest. Then let the station personnel direct you.

It may be that they'd want basic information for 10- or 30-second psa's. If so, get the information in at least three weeks in advance.

Perhaps the station will help produce a 30- or 60-second spot to be run for several weeks. If you are this fortunate, get someone from your project who is knowledgeable and can sell your idea to the camera.

Preparing Art and Copy for PSAs

You can figure roughly 25 words for 10 seconds, 65 words for 30 seconds, and 125 words for 60 seconds. Read and time it to be sure. In 10 seconds you can only hit the highlights, so choose your wording carefully. TV stations have hundreds of requests for psa's, so they often pick the psa's done best.

Artwork for psa's is usually a slide (or slides) prepared from a horizontal poster, 11x14 or 12x19. Keep the message short and simple, perhaps using only the title or logo of the project. Try to keep the lettering in the style of your flyers, letterheads, etc. Type should be no smaller than 42 point.

Consult the station about what you want to do and be sure they think it will be effective. Have a project or community member (sometimes the station will do this for you) photograph the poster into horizontal color slides. If you have a spot longer than 10 seconds, you will need more than your "signature slide". Perhaps slides of the speakers, scenes from the community, or project member "in action" will do, but again, consult the station.

Public Affairs Programs or talk shows are also a possiblity. These could include interviews with out-of-town speakers and project leaders. Find out if the local stations have such programs. Make a fact sheet and request an appointment with the person in charge of the show. Be sure you can offer something interesting and informative.

TV News departments should always be invited to cover events on the spot or interview the speaker or project leaders.

WORD OF MOUTH

In spite of all the possibilities of communication through print and electronic media, one thing still does more to secure audiences than anything else - word of mouth. Audience response has shown that word of mouth is by far the most effective means of informing and interesting the public about an event. Remember to let all project members know the importance of the personal contact. Be sure not to omit the telephone as a valuable resource - "telephone campaigns" can be very effective and have a minimal cost.

ENERGY ISSUE FORUM

Anytown Public Library

Contact: Mark Booker (123-4567)
100 Main St.
Anytown, AL 36912

Release: February 3, 1980

The Anytown Public Library will host a public forum discussing "Energy: The Search for Solutions" at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, February 8, in the conference room of the library. Featured speaker, Dr. Tim Horn, will discuss how special interest groups, such as business, labor and environmentalists, can influence how decisions are made to meet the problems of energy.

Mark Booker, Director of the Library, said that this forum is part of a series of forums being held across the U.S. to involve citizens at every level in solving the complex energy issue. The projects are sponsored by The National Endowment for the Humanities through a grant to the American Library Association. The Alabama Public Library Service is one of the groups chosen by ALA to design model humanities programs through libraries on the topic of "Energy and the Way We Live."

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ENERGY ISSUE FORUM

Anytown Public Library

Contact: Mark Booker (123-4567)
100 Main St.
Anytown, AL 36912

Release: February 3, 1980

FACT SHEET:

What	Public forum on "Energy and the Way We Live"
Who	Sponsored by Anytown Public Library and the Alabama Public Library Service through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities
When & Where	7:30 p.m., Friday, February 8, in the conference room of the Anytown Public Library.
Why	To bring humanities scholars, scientists & the general public together to examine the energy issue, its options and trade-offs
How	Free, open to the public

# # #

flyer or poster-example #3

THIRD ANNUAL HUGO L. BLACK SYMPOSIUM IN HISTORY

April 6-7, 1978
Cudworth Hall
University of Alabama in Birmingham

Sponsored by the History Department, the Alabama Committee for the Humanities and Public Policy, and the Graduate Student Association.

Southern Women: Myth and Reality

PROGRAM

10:30 A.M. Thursday, April 6

The History of Southern Women: What We Know and What We Wish We Knew — Professor Anne Firor Scott, Duke University

Presiding: Virginia Foster Durr, Wetumpka, Alabama

8 P.M. Thursday, April 6

The Slave Woman at the Moment of Emancipation — Professor Herbert Gutman, Smith College

Presiding: Vivian Malone Jones, Director, Voter Education Project, Atlanta, Georgia

10:30 A.M. Friday, April

Neither "Girl" nor "Lady" — Observations on the Southern White Working Class Woman — Dr. Susan Estabrook Kennedy, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia.

Black Working Women in the South — Fannie A. Neal, Southern Director, Volunteers in Politics COPE AFL-CIO, Montgomery, Alabama.

Presiding: Dr. Virginia V. Hamilton, Chairperson, Hugo Black Symposium.

8:15 P.M. Friday, April 7

Southern Women of the Future — Representative Lindy Boggs, New Orleans, Louisiana

Presiding: Justice Janie Shores, Supreme Court of Alabama

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ALL SESSIONS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC WITHOUT CHARGE.

uab graphic arts '78

PSA - example #4

Anytown Public Library - Mark Booker (123-4567)

30 Second Public Service Spot

GOOD: February 3 - February 8 at 5:00 p.m.

ANNR: Are we really in the midst of an historic crisis concerning energy? Who will decide what is to be done? Find out by attending a public forum on "Energy and the Way We Live" this Friday night at 7:30 at the Anytown Public Library. Sponsored by the Alabama Public Library Service through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

* *

PLEASE NOTE

It is very important that the agencies supporting this program, which are listed below, be credited in public notices and announcements:

Alabama Humanities Resource Center

Alabama Public Library Service

American Library Association

National Endowment for the Humanities

And, if applicable

Committee for the Humanities in Alabama

* *